

by these agencies is commendable, needs to be a model throughout the Nation.

I would ask that Members wear these little blue ribbons today.

#### WHITE HOUSE NOT COOPERATING WITH INVESTIGATIONS

(Mr. BRADY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRADY. Mr. Speaker, I sometimes wonder why investigations take so long around here. Maybe you do as well. I know that the White House has insisted that they are cooperating fully with the various investigations and investigators charged with finding out the truth about the illegal campaign contributions in the last elections. But I think I now know why we are having so much trouble getting there.

There are 92 witnesses, that is 92 witnesses have either fled the country or taken the fifth amendment, refused to testify. When you are not afraid to tell the truth, if there is nothing to hide, why would 92 American citizens flee this country or hide behind the fifth amendment?

When the FBI director, Louis Freeh, was asked last year if he had ever seen this before, the only similarity he could draw was during the 16 years he spent investigating organized crime cases. I do not know if this is organized crime, but I know the White House is saying it is cooperating fully, but no one is cooperating.

#### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM INVESTIGATION STYMIED AT EVERY TURN

(Mr. SESSIONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, during the past few days, we have heard a lot about the ability to hear from witnesses in an objective investigation of the facts surrounding campaign financing. All I hear from the Democrats is that Congress must vote on campaign finance reform.

Well, my committee, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, is trying to find out what is wrong with campaign financing. But our investigation had been stymied at every single turn. There are witnesses who have been unavailable to the committee, 46 witnesses who have refused to testify, asserting protections against self-incrimination, and 12 witnesses who have fled the country.

Incredibly, the Democrats on the committee have refused to allow immunity for witnesses that Janet Reno, the Attorney General, says should have immunity. Mr. Speaker, this will prevent us from hearing from those witnesses. My question to the Democrats is this: What are you attempting to hide?

#### NATIONAL SECURITY DEMONSTRATION SET FOR WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

(Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, to begin the markup of the National Defense Authorization bill this week, I want to call to the attention of our colleagues two significant events that will take place tomorrow and Thursday involving national security and threats from weapons of mass destruction.

All day tomorrow in the Rayburn courtyard, we will have a full demonstration of one of our leading new technologies, the Theater High Altitude Area Defense system as well as a Scud missile, the type of missile that killed our 28 troops in Saudi Arabia just 7 years ago. I would encourage our colleagues to visit that exhibit.

On Thursday, we will have 2,000 fire and EMS leaders from across the country assemble in Washington. At noon, we will have a major rally outside the doors of this Chamber to focus on the need for first responders to get full attention and focus as we plus-up money to respond to terrorist acts involving weapons of mass destruction nationwide.

I would encourage our colleagues to visit both events and to become active participants in the rally and the event from our fire and EMS leaders from all of our 50 States.

□ 1415

#### ELIMINATE THE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY NOW

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, the question today is, why pass the Marriage Tax Elimination Act? I believe this series of questions best illustrates why.

Do Americans feel that it is fair that working married couples with two incomes pay higher taxes just because they are married? Do Americans feel that it is fair that 21 million married working couples pay, on the average, \$1,400 more just because they are married than an identical couple with an identical income living together outside of marriage? Do Americans feel that it is fair that our Tax Code actually provides an incentive to get divorced?

Of course not. That is wrong, and that is why elimination of the marriage tax penalty is so important.

If we think about it, 21 million married working couples, 42 million Americans, pay on the average of \$1,400 more just because they are married. That is one year's tuition at Joliet Junior College in the south suburbs of Chicago; three months in a local day care center. It is real money for real people.

Mr. Speaker, let us eliminate the marriage penalty. Let us eliminate it now.

#### CONGRESS SHOULD MOVE AGGRESSIVELY TO PUT SOCIAL SECURITY FIRST

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, a word on Social Security. Today the Social Security trustees released the annual report on their new projections when Social Security runs short of money to pay benefits. Because of the economic growth, because of the good economy with more jobs and higher incomes, they are now projecting that we are going to have an extra year or so before Social Security has less tax revenue coming in than is required to pay benefits. We still have a very, very serious problem.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House and the Senate, I urge the President not to use this as an excuse to delay and put off and not deal with the serious problems of Social Security. The current good economy is an opportunity to move ahead with long term solutions giving more flexibility for transition.

Mr. Speaker, Social Security is one of the important problems that is facing us right now with an unfunded liability of over \$3 trillion. Let us move ahead aggressively with a solution and really put Social Security first.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5, rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded voted or the yeas and the nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 5 p.m. today.

#### RHINO AND TIGER PRODUCT LABELING ACT

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2807) to amend the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 to prohibit the sale, importation, and exportation of products labeled as containing substances derived from rhinoceros or tiger, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2807

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Rhino and Tiger Product Labeling Act".

**SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON SALE, IMPORTATION, AND EXPORTATION OF PRODUCTS LABELED AS CONTAINING A SUBSTANCE DERIVED FROM RHINOCEROS OR TIGER.**

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) The populations of several magnificent and unique endangered species of rhinoceros and tigers, such as the Indian rhinoceros, the Javan rhinoceros, the African black rhinoceros, and all of the tiger subspecies, continue to decline.

(2) Growing demand throughout the world for wildlife and wildlife parts and products has created a market in which commercial exploitation has threatened certain rhinoceros and tiger populations.

(3) There are insufficient legal mechanisms enabling the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to forcefully interdict products that are labeled as containing substances derived from rhinoceros or tiger species and prosecute the merchandisers for sale or display of those products.

(4) Although approximately 77,000 import and export shipments occur annually in the United States, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is able to maintain only 92 wildlife inspectors at 30 ports of entry, including 13 designated ports, to monitor the shipments.

(5) Wildlife inspectors are able to physically inspect only an estimated 5 to 10 percent of all import and export shipments, making the rate of detection of contraband wildlife products extremely low.

(6) Alternatives are available to the traditional medicinal products that contain substances derived from rhinoceros and tiger species.

(7) Public education initiatives directed toward traditional user groups on the endangered status of rhinoceros and tiger species and on the availability of alternative products in traditional medicine have proven useful in reducing the demand for products labeled as containing substances derived from rhinoceros and tiger species, and should be encouraged.

(b) PROHIBITION, PENALTIES, AND ENFORCEMENT.—The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) is amended by redesignating section 7 as section 8, and by inserting after section 6 the following:

**“SEC. 7. PROHIBITION RELATING TO PRODUCTS CONTAINING OR PURPORTING TO CONTAIN ANY SUBSTANCE DERIVED FROM A RHINOCEROS OR TIGER SPECIES.**

“(a) PROHIBITION.—No person shall sell, import, or export, or attempt to sell, import, or export any product, item, or substance intended for human consumption containing or purporting to contain any substance derived from any species of rhinoceros or tiger.

“(b) PENALTIES.—

“(1) CRIMINAL PENALTY.—Any person who knowingly violates subsection (a) shall be fined under title 18, United States Code, imprisoned for not more than 1 year, or both.

“(2) CIVIL PENALTIES.—Any person who knowingly violates, and any person engaged in business as an importer, distributor, or retailer of products, items, or substances purporting to contain substances derived from any species of rhinoceros or tiger who violates subsection (a) may be assessed a civil penalty by the Secretary of not more than \$25,000 for each violation. A civil penalty under this paragraph shall be assessed, and may be collected, in the manner in which a civil penalty under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 may be assessed and collected under section 11(a) of that Act (16 U.S.C. 1540(a)).

“(c) FORFEITURES.—Any product, item, or substance sold, imported, or exported, or at-

tempted to be sold, imported, or exported, contrary to the provisions of this Act or any regulation made pursuant thereto shall be seized and forfeited to the United States. All equipment, vessels, vehicles, aircraft, and other means of transportation used to aid the selling, exporting, or importing, or an attempt to sell, export, or import, of any product, item, or substance in violation of this Act or any regulation issued pursuant to this Act, may be seized and forfeited to the United States. All laws relating to the seizure, forfeiture, and condemnation of a vessel for violation of the customs laws, the disposition of such vessel or the proceeds from the sale thereof, and the remission or mitigation of such forfeiture, shall apply to the seizures and forfeitures incurred under this Act, insofar as those laws are applicable and not inconsistent with this Act.

“(d) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary, after consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the United States Trade Representative, shall prescribe regulations that are necessary and appropriate to carry out the purposes of this Act.

“(e) ENFORCEMENT.—The Secretary, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall enforce this Act in the same manner such Secretaries carry out enforcement activities under section 11(e) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1540(e)).”

(c) DEFINITION OF PERSON.—Section 4 of the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) is amended by—

(1) striking “and” at the end of paragraph (4);

(2) striking the period at the end of paragraph (5) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) adding at the end the following:

“(6) ‘person’ means—

“(A) an individual, corporation, partnership, trust, association, or other private entity;

“(B) an officer, employee, agent, department, or instrumentality of the Federal Government, of any State, municipality, or political subdivision of a State, or of any foreign government;

“(C) a State, municipality, or political subdivision of a State; or

“(D) any other entity subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SAXTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the House is now considering H.R. 2807, a bill which I introduced with the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) entitled the Rhinoceros and Tiger Product Labeling Act.

The fundamental goals of this measure are to eliminate the U.S. market for illegally obtained rhino and tiger products and, by so doing, the incentive to kill these magnificent animals.

All populations of rhinos and tigers have been listed as endangered for over 20 years. Despite this fact, there are thousands of prepackaged oriental medicines sitting on pharmacy shelves

throughout America with labels indicating they contain parts of rhinos and tigers.

In fact, according to a recent survey conducted by the World Wildlife Fund, nearly 50 percent of the 110 shops they visited in North America offered medicines for sale containing or claiming to contain rhino and tiger parts. Investigators identified at least 31 types of rhino and tiger medicines that have been produced by 34 different manufacturers.

What is most shocking was the study conclusion that the availability of these products has greatly increased over the last 5 years, while the danger to rhinos and tigers has increased as well.

While these products are primarily manufactured in China, the U.S. has become a major market for their sale. Those who buy these medicines believe they are effective in combating pain, headaches, convulsions and other ills. Unfortunately, those practicing traditional Chinese medicine are not aware that synthetic alternatives are available and that they are directly contributing to the demise of rhinos and tigers.

The underlying problem and the primary reason law enforcement officials are not confiscating these medicines is because it is virtually impossible to conclusively prove that they contain rhino and tiger parts. It would cost thousands of dollars to perform DNA tests on each of these products, and neither the Customs Service nor the Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient resources to even begin to undertake such a massive job.

The Rhinoceros and Tiger Product Labeling Act, which has now been cosponsored by over 40 Members, will solve that problem. Quite simply, if a label on a product says that it contains rhino and tiger parts, then we accept the truthfulness of the manufacturer's claim and stop the sale in the United States. In other words, the label is enough proof under this law. This will save the Federal Government a substantial amount of money, and it will help to ensure that rhinos and tigers can continue to survive in the wild.

During our subcommittee hearing on H.R. 2807, every witness testified in strong support of the bill and for closing the loophole in our wildlife laws. These groups include the Clinton administration, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, the International Rhino Foundation, Safari Club International, and the World Wildlife Fund.

In his testimony, Dr. Terry Maple, the president-elect of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, stated that passage of H.R. 2807, combined with increased appropriations for law enforcement, will certainly be a bold step by the United States in ending the slaughter of rhinoceros and tigers in the world.

I urge an “aye” vote on H.R. 2807; and I want to thank my colleagues who have joined in this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume and rise in strong support of this legislation and thank the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), for bringing this matter both before the committee and before the House of Representatives.

Over the course of the past hundred years, conflict with humans has brought literally thousands of species to the brink of extinction. In the past, those conflicts were often direct and bloody: the Passenger Pigeon, eliminated from this planet by hunting; great whales almost brought to the same fate by the commercial whaling industry; and the African elephant, whose numbers were decimated by greedy ivory traders.

Today's story of the rhinoceros and the tiger is a little more complicated. Perhaps the conflict is a little less direct, but it is just as bloody. Throughout their range, these two magnificent species have been brought to their knees by habitat destruction and commercial trade in the products made from their carcasses.

While the CITES convention, the Convention on International Trade and Endangered Fauna and Flora, has made great strides in controlling the international trade in rhino horn daggers and in tiger skins, these species continue to decline, due in part to the huge demand for traditional medicines using rhino and tiger products.

A few years ago, Secretary Babbitt and the Clinton administration used their authority under the Pelly Amendment to the Fisherman's Protective Act to impose economic sanctions against Taiwan for failing to control this trade. It was the right decision, and it proved to be immensely helpful in getting the Government of Taiwan to work with the international conservation community to protect these animals.

Unfortunately, the global rules of free trade now prevent the United States from using unilateral economic sanctions to protect wildlife, a lesson we have just had driven home to us by the World Trade Organization in its ruling against U.S. laws protecting the endangered sea turtles from irresponsible shrimp fishing practices.

That makes this legislation even more important. It sends a clear message that any product imported illegally or labeled as containing rhino or tiger parts will, in fact, automatically be considered as contraband. As a result, our Fish and Wildlife agents can act to seize the product and prosecute the seller, many of whom will be committing a double crime by promoting an illegal product and falsifying the contents with synthetic or other substitutes for rhino and tiger ingredients.

I would have preferred that my colleague and I were here today to debate the reauthorization of this Nation's

premier wildlife protection law, the Endangered Species Act. Unfortunately, the committee has been unable so far to move this legislation that would responsibly reauthorize a statute designed to protect hundreds of endangered and threatened species worldwide, and it now appears another Congress will pass without full consideration of this important law. Certainly, the protection afforded by the Rhinoceros and Tiger Product Labeling Act will prove invaluable to these two species. I wish we could agree to protect all the endangered species as well.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is worthy of the support of all of the Members of the House of Representatives. Those of us who have had the opportunity to travel to some of the habitat of rhinoceros, of tigers, of even elephants, have met with government officials in Zimbabwe and other countries where we have seen the contraband that has been seized by poachers who kill these magnificent animals only for a very small part, in some cases the rhinoceros horn, in some cases they kill animals for their gallbladders, they kill them for their bones, for various body parts, and, obviously, the entire animal is decimated. It is destroyed for this trade.

When we see the kinds of risk and the kinds of money that is put into the poaching, the illegal taking of these animals, it becomes very clear that we have got to do what we can, within the laws of the United States and certainly within our international trade agreements, to now make it more and more difficult, to have sanctions on countries that look the other way while these magnificent animals are being violated. They look the other way while illegal traffic is taking part; and, in some instances, governmental officials are taking bribes to allow people to engage in this activity.

There is an effort to make sure that those who would deal and traffic in the parts of rhinos and tigers are kind of caught in a double whammy here. If they truthfully label their product for sale on the shelves of outlets in the United States, they are in violation of the law. If they mislead the public and they hide the fact it has it, they are in violation of the law.

We met and the chairman went to great lengths to meet with the traditional medicine community that assured us there were, in fact, substitutes for these parts of rhinos and tigers that are in keeping with traditional medicine. And what that means and what that tells us is that the slaughter of these animals is simply then about greed and about the illegal trafficking in the parts of these animals.

So I would hope that all my colleagues would support this legislation, and again I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) for his presentation of this bill and to all of the staff on both sides of the committee that have worked hard to bring this legislation to the floor of the

Congress. Hopefully, we will make a major contribution in reducing the illegal traffic and the absolutely unnecessary slaughter of these two magnificent creatures.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

As both my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), and I indicated earlier, there has been a broad range of support for this effort, and I want to personally thank the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), for his cooperation. Inasmuch as this is a trade issue, it was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and their responsibility was waived by the chairman, and we want to thank him for that.

I also want to mention the gentleman from the other body, Mr. JEFFORDS, has been extremely effective in his leadership in the other body, and I hope that we will together be able to make strides this year in bringing this to fruition.

□ 1430

I would just like to close, Mr. Speaker, by saying that this is not just an issue that is considered here in Congress. I have here a copy of Time Magazine from, I believe, March 1994, and it features an article about this issue, and it has a picture of one of these great cats on the cover; and the headline here on the cover is "Doomed, Why the Real Tiger is on the Brink of Extinction." And it goes on at some length in the feature story to talk about tigers on the brink. "Once considered a conservation success story, they are again sliding towards extinction. This time the world's nations may not be able to save these great cats."

And that is what we are here today making an effort to do. And in the story it just points out that the levels of populations throughout that part of the world that the tigers live, that many of the species, the Siberian tiger, for example, the population is down to an estimated 150 to 200 animals. The South China tiger is down to an estimated population of 30 to 80 animals. The Javan tiger has been extinct since the 1980s. The Bali tiger has been extinct since the 1940s. The Caspian tiger has been extinct since the 1970s. The Indochinese tiger is down to a population of 1,000 to 1,700. And the Bengal tiger, which apparently in India is the most healthy of the species, has a population of an estimated 3,300 to 4,700 animals.

So we are hopeful that everyone here today will vote in favor of H.R. 2807, the Rhino Tiger Labeling Act. It is a very simple concept. It simply makes it relatively easy for us to enforce the laws that this House has previously passed. So, Mr. Speaker, I hope everyone will vote yea today.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2807, the Rhino and Tiger Product Labeling Act, a bill introduced by the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, JIM SAXTON.

There is no question that intense competition for land has resulted in the destruction of critical rhino and tiger habitat. After all, we are talking about some of the most densely populated countries in the world.

Nevertheless, the major cause of the decline of rhinos and tigers is the huge ongoing demand for products made from these animals. For generations, Oriental medicines have contained ingredients of rhino and tiger parts that are consumed to fight headaches and fever in children, kidney and liver problems, convulsions, and heart conditions. In almost all cases, rhino horn and tiger bones are obtained from illegal sources.

We must eliminate the market for these products and stop their importation into the United States. This is the goal of H.R. 2807. Instead of spending thousands of dollars trying to prove whether a particular Chinese medicine contains rhino or tiger parts, this legislation simply prohibits them from entering this country if the label says they contain these highly endangered species.

By closing the U.S. market, the hope is that the demand for these products will end and the financial incentives to illegally kill rhino or tiger will no longer exist.

Furthermore, there are synthetic alternatives to these products and it is essential that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service renew their educational efforts. Based on surveys conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Society, the majority of those people consuming traditional medicines have no idea they might be contributing to the destruction of these flagship species.

I urge an aye vote on this bold wildlife conservation legislation which will hopefully stop the slaughter of rhinos and tigers in the wild.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,  
Washington, DC, April 23, 1998.

Hon. DON YOUNG,  
Chairman, Committee on Resources, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR DON: I am writing to address certain issues with H.R. 2807, as reported by the Committee on Resources on March 11, 1998, which would amend the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994. The bill contains import prohibition and Customs forfeiture provisions, which fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

With respect to the import ban, H.R. 2807, as reported by the Committee on Resources, prohibits any person from selling, importing or exporting or attempting to sell, import, or export any product, item or substance intended for human consumption containing or purporting to contain any substance derived from any species of rhinoceros or tiger, creates criminal and civil penalties, and allows for the forfeiture of such products. Because these provisions fall within the Committee's jurisdiction, the Committee would ordinarily meet to consider the bill. However, because the bill, as reported, applies the ban in compliance with the letter and spirit of U.S. obligations under an existing multilateral agreement governing such trade, I do not believe that a markup of the bill is necessary.

With respect to forfeiture, section 2 of H.R. 2807, as reported, includes language within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways

and Means. Under normal circumstances the Committee would meet to consider the bill. However, it is my understanding that you will be offering an amendment on the floor of the House of Representatives to substitute the following language so that the existing statutory Customs forfeiture provisions would apply:

(c) Forfeitures.—Any product, item, or substance sold, imported, or exported, or attempted to be sold, imported, or exported, contrary to the provisions of this Act or any regulation made pursuant thereto shall be seized and forfeited to the United States. All equipment, vessels, vehicles, aircraft, and other means of transportation used to aid the selling, exporting, or importing, or an attempt to sell, export, of any product, item, or substance in violation of this Act or any regulation issued pursuant to this Act, may be seized and forfeited to the United States. All laws relating to the seizure, forfeiture, and condemnation of a vessel for violation of the customs laws, the disposition of such vessel or the proceeds from the sale thereof, and the remission or mitigation of such forfeiture, shall apply to the seizures and forfeitures incurred under this Act, insofar as those laws are applicable and not inconsistent with this Act.

Based on your assurances to this effect, and in order to expedite consideration of this legislation, I do not believe that a markup by the Committee on Ways and Means will be necessary on this issue.

I would appreciate your response to this letter, confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 2807, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the record during floor consideration. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance on this matter.

With best personal regards,  
BILL ARCHER,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES,  
Washington, DC, April 23, 1998.

Hon. BILL ARCHER,  
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,  
Longworth HOB, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2807, the Rhino and Tiger Product Labeling Act. Enactment of this bill will help enforce the existing ban on the sale, import or export of products containing rhinoceros and tiger parts and therefore help conservation efforts for these endangered species.

I agree that the Committee on Ways and Means has jurisdiction over import prohibitions and U.S. Customs Service forfeitures. As noted in your letter, current law already prohibits imports and exports of products containing endangered species under the Lacey Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. In addition, when H.R. 2807 is considered by the House of Representatives, I do intend to substitute the forfeiture language of the bill you have identified regarding Customs powers, as this provision also duplicates Lacey Act authority for the Secretary of the Interior.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter, and I will place our correspondence on this issue in the Congressional Record during debate on H.R. 2807.

Sincerely,  
DON YOUNG,  
Chairman.

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2807, the Rhinoceros and Tiger Product Labeling Act. This bill is a key bipartisan step to protect two of our planet's most precious and endangered animals—rhinos and tigers.

Rhinos and tigers are coming perilously close to extinction in the wild because of illegal poaching to support the high demand for traditional medications. Congress has worked to protect these majestic animals by creating the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund, and by banning the import or sale of products that contain parts of endangered species.

Despite these laws to protect rhinos and tigers, a loophole allows many products to be sold in the United States that explicitly state—on their labels, no less—that they contain rhino and tiger parts.

Proving that these products contain banned substances can be extremely difficult. Even after performing costly tests, the U.S. Customs Service often can't prove what the labels plainly show—that these products contain rhino and tiger parts and are illegal. The result is that many such products end up in stores across America.

The Rhinoceros and Tiger Labeling Act would stop this costly and confusing exercise, and allow us to accept product labels at their face value. If products say they contain parts of endangered animals, we shouldn't let them in the country.

I strongly support this bipartisan legislation to stop the flaunting of our laws and strengthen protections for endangered species.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2807, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2807.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

#### CONGRATULATING PEOPLE OF SRI LANKA ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 350) congratulating the people of Sri Lanka on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of their nation's independence.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.RES. 350

Whereas on February 4, 1948, the people of Sri Lanka gained their independence from the British;

Whereas the people of Sri Lanka and the United States have a common interest in the promotion and preservation of democratic systems of government;

Whereas the people of Sri Lanka and the United States have had many shared values